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Mrs Julie Hampson
Park Road Junior, Infant and Nursery School
Park Road
Batley
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WF17 5LP

Dear Mrs Hampson

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Park Road Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Following my visit to your school on 29 March 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its section 5 inspection before the one that took place in March 2016, the school was also judged to require improvement.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good school.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that all middle and senior leaders have a very clear indication of their roles and responsibilities, particularly regarding how they will gather and record information on the monitoring of teaching and learning, and that they are held to account for the impact of their role on school improvement.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you, as acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher and the vice-chair of the governing body to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. A telephone conversation was held with the national leader in education who is currently supporting the school. We visited several lessons and considered the work in a number of pupils' books to consider the quality of teaching across the school. Documentation relating to the safeguarding of pupils was scrutinised as well as information on the impact of pupil premium funding and pupil progress information. A considerable amount of time was spent with you and the acting deputy headteacher looking at current arrangements for performance management and the monitoring of teaching and learning.

Context

There have been major changes in staffing at all levels since the last inspection.

You were appointed in September 2016 as acting headteacher following a period when an acting headteacher worked part time within the school. There have been many changes in the teaching team and, since the last inspection, a number of teaching posts have been held by temporary teaching staff. These changes have also led to a reduction in the number of middle leaders. You, your senior leaders and governors have a clear plan for succession and stability for staffing in the school. New permanent teachers with leadership experience have been appointed for September 2017 and it is the intention that a permanent headteacher will be appointed from September 2017.

Main findings

You, your deputy and governors have an accurate view of the school. You acknowledge that the quality of teaching in the school is still not consistently good enough. However, you have been determined to improve the quality of teaching, even when at times this has been difficult and led to the need for temporary staff to take on teaching roles. You have ensured that the monitoring of teaching and learning is regular and identifies the individual areas for improvement for each teacher. The acting deputy headteacher, who is also the lead for mathematics, does this particularly well. This has enabled you and your team to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the previous inspection. However, as you do not have a preferred manner in which you wish monitoring to be undertaken and documented, it is difficult for other leaders to clearly understand their role and responsibilities and for you to hold them to account for their part in school improvement.

You and your staff have worked well with national and senior leaders in education from a local outstanding school. This has enabled your staff to see examples of exceptional practice and learn and by sharing ideas with good and outstanding

teachers. Evidence in pupils' books and from pupil progress information shows that pupils are generally making better progress. Teachers are beginning to have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve and they are beginning to challenge them more, particularly as they have a more accurate picture of what they know and can do. You, your senior leaders and governors recognise that although improvement has been made, it needs to be faster, particularly for pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, who have poor levels of attainment and progress due to a legacy of poor teaching.

Long-term absences of middle leaders since the last inspection mean that these roles have still not been fully developed as expected. However, those currently in post are receiving comprehensive external support which is enabling them to develop their roles more effectively. Experienced middle leaders have been appointed for September 2017, so it is anticipated that the part middle leaders play in school improvement from September 2017 will be stronger. However, you and the governors recognise that you must give a clear indication of what you expect from these new appointees and how you will hold them to account for their role in school improvement.

Pupils behave well and enjoy being in school. They speak of how behaviour is good, particularly in lessons, when any disruption to learning is rare. They are respectful to each other and the school works well to get them to think of others who have different beliefs and values from them and then debate the morality of those beliefs. Pupils feel safe and were able to give examples of how they learn to keep themselves safe, such as when riding a bike or when using the internet. You have ensured that all appropriate checks are made, reports are well documented and stored and links are made with other agencies, when needed.

You and your team have enriched the curriculum to enhance the better teaching of knowledge and skills across other subjects, as required from the previous inspection. Specialist teachers teach French, music and physical education and a much wider range of after-school activities are available free of charge.

Children in the early years environment enjoy provision that is now planned with a clear purpose for learning and challenge. It is a stimulating environment, both inside and outside, which gives children access to all areas of learning. Learning journeys to show children's achievements have been restructured and moderated so that it is clear what children can do and what they need to do next. Early years staff have been trained so that they can deliver a commercial phonics scheme, so that children can make better progress in this area of learning.

The acting deputy headteacher has led a comprehensive review of pupil premium fund spending. She continues to monitor closely the impact of this funding. This funding is now well used to support both pastoral and educational needs of these pupils. The impact on the attendance of these pupils is evident as it has improved from 94.8% last year to 95.2% this year. A range of strategies, such as the involvement of the school nurse, the learning mentor, extra teaching support and

after-school activities, have clearly impacted on the progress these pupils are now making. Although their attainment and progress still lags behind that of other pupils nationally, it is much closer to, and in some year groups above that of, other pupils in school.

Governors work well with you and your team to bring about improvements. They recognise that they need to challenge you more and hold you to account for school improvement more robustly. Governors agree that clarity with regards to roles and responsibilities will allow them to hold all leaders to account more rigorously. Governors are extremely keen to ensure that this school moves at a faster rate towards good or outstanding and have worked hard to plan for stability in the teaching staff as well as improvements in the quality of teaching.

External support

The local authority has brokered support for you from a local outstanding school. A national leader and two specialist leaders in education have given, and still give, the school extremely regular and valuable support. This support has allowed clear identification and prioritising of areas which need improvement in school. This has had a direct impact on an improvement in the standard of teaching pupils have received. Staff, including those in the early years, have been able to see examples of outstanding and good teaching and learning and use these examples to improve their own practice and learning environments. This support has also helped you to identify what individual teachers need to do to improve their teaching and learning skills and subject knowledge.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Kirklees. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jo Sharpe
Her Majesty's Inspector